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Federal Extension Service  
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture

EXTENSION WORK WITH

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

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A great many young men and women who live in rural areas are making their most difficult and important decisions now. They want and need help with their problems and interests, but many do not find it. The cooperative Extension Service has offered some assistance for a long time. The expanded program described in this bulletin is suggested in an attempt to meet more fully the needs of these young people.

WHY YMW WORK?

Young People Have Their Problems

In 1950 nearly 3,000 young men and women 18 to 30 years of age lived on the farms and in the rural areas of an average county in the United States. Perhaps half of these lived on "commercial" farms. Many lived in rural areas but worked in villages or cities. Most of them were out of school.

Theirs is an age for decision making. Many are leaving their parental family circle. For some this means new opportunities. For all of them, it creates problems. Even if they are remaining at home, there are adjustments regarding personal income, inheritance laws, partnership arrangements or living quarters that need to be worked out.

Individual help and counsel is more needed by young people of 18 to 30 than during any other age period. But they actually receive less. Why? As a County Extension Agent, you know many of the reasons, such as:

1. They are a transitory group --- here today and gone tomorrow.
2. They are out of high school and most boy-girl organizations.  
They are not yet absorbed into adult activities.
3. Only about one-eighth of our rural people 18 to 30 participate in group meetings outside of church.
4. Many do not know what they want to do or be. Or at least, they cannot express their needs and desires clearly.

Reports show that about one-third of the county extension agents are now giving special attention to the problems of young men and women. You, as county agents, helped a total of 371,406 young people in 1953. The assistance you give and the ways you give it vary widely. Four kinds of work stand out:

1. You helped 68,530 young people in Extension sponsored groups.
2. You helped 26,286 young people in groups jointly sponsored by Extension.
3. You helped 192,073 young people in other groups.
4. You helped 84,517 young people as individuals not a part of a group.

#### They Make Three Basic Decisions

Young adults make three basic decisions. Each involves problems of choice that nearly everyone faces at some time.

1. They choose a vocation

Shall I be a farmer or get a job in town?

Shall I start out alone or farm with Dad?

Shall I buy, rent, or hire out for wages to gain experience?

What credit and financing plan is best?

As a young woman, how can I earn money?

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Shall I try a business or professional career or be a homemaker?

Shall we plan and furnish a home?

Shall we live and share with parents?

2. They choose a mate.

How important are attractiveness, personality, and efficiency?

What are good dress, grooming, and social behavior?

Shall I keep "steady company"?

How can young married couples make adjustments and reach common goals?

What are the child-care problems of young parents?

3. They choose their personal philosophy.

What is the best attitude toward religion?

Shall I work more for wealth or for gracious living?

Is our economy, based on the profit system, better than the planned state?

What politics and citizenship standards shall I follow?

How is education related to efficient operation?

Shall I continue my formal schooling?

Though not all young people recognize these personal problems or express them in words, you as an extension agent can help them in many ways to find the answers.

Here's what young people are saying to county agents:

\* In our community there are about 100 rural young people 18 to 30 years of age. Most of us are out of school.

\* Some of us are at home helping our parents.

\* Half of us want to start farming. The rest want to find suitable jobs elsewhere.

- \* We all want to make new friendships.
- \* We do not have enough part in the present adult organizations of this community. We do want to be an important part of our community life.
- \* We are eager to get new ideas. We will try them out if they look good to us.
- \* We would like to meet together under wholesome conditions to work, study and relax.
- \* We will help all we can with our own program planning and organization problems, but don't expect us to have much "know-how."
- \* Will you help us?

Tips for your approach toward a program:

If you desire effective programs, base them on real needs and build them around the active interests of the young people in your county. Your long-time plans for these programs should provide a balance among education, recreation, and community-service features.

Make the keynote of all programs "helping young people to help themselves." Give those who take part a chance for personal growth. Work with and through representative committees or groups in the community. Delegate responsibility. Even the least experienced young people can help make situation surveys or do certain chores in connection with meetings. Don't try to carry the full load yourself.

Survey or Study Their Situations

Find out - - -

1. Who is available? (Number, age, marital and vocational status).
2. What are their interests and needs?

3. What are the resources available to serve them? (organizations, agencies, and services)
4. Are the needs now being met or do they want your services? Young people themselves, plus the adult leaders of the community can best advise with you on this decision.
5. If there are important needs and you are asked to help meet them, work with all the available resources in developing an effective program.

### Planning to Meet Needs

#### Two major groups

In all probability, you will find that young people divide themselves naturally into two major interest groups, according to their situations:

#### A. Suggestions for Out of School Unmarried Young People:

A primary need of this interest group is to sample and explore. In America one of our greatest characteristics is mobility. We believe in every individual's right to choose his own vocation, mate, way of life, and place of residence. It follows that youth need as much information as possible as a guide toward making these important choices. Here are some ideas for helping with their vocational problems:

1. Obtain information and counsel about all types of jobs.
2. Give help (such as aptitude tests) in choosing a vocation.
3. Provide specific agricultural and homemaking training in how to get started; farm and home management; crop and livestock production; marketing and purchasing; use and

upkeep of farm buildings and equipment; home furnishings; principles of nutrition; clothing needs; cultural and social values of rural life.

4. Help to survey and analyze other opportunities in the home community.
5. Show young people how to apply for a job.
6. Teach them how to hold a job.
7. Organize tours to industrial plants.

B. Suggestions for Young Married Couples

The jobs of getting started in farming, raising a young family or developing a home will largely occupy the attentions of young married couples. Accordingly, their educational interests may include:

1. Farm management, planning and principles of balanced farming.
2. Marketing, purchasing and off-the-farm business.
3. Home management, home furnishings.
4. Child care, family life education.
5. Soils, agronomy, agricultural engineering.
6. Wise use of credit.
7. Livestock, dairy or poultry management.
8. Home improvement, modern labor-saving equipment, principles of color and design.
9. Study of public policy and current affairs.

C. General Program Suggestions of Interest to All Ages or Groups

1. Organize health and safety programs. Include health examinations and education about disease, community health and

safety campaigns, plans for hospital and medical care, fire and accident-prevention demonstrations.

2. Study phases of human relationships, such as personal social improvement, grooming and etiquette; the Golden Rule applied to good relationships; problems of courtesy and etiquette (give demonstrations and hold discussions); "dating" and choosing a mate; conditions for a successful marriage; understanding of parent-child relationships; important economic and social values and standards; developing a philosophy of life, culture, politics, and religion; problems of world peace and international understanding.

Help young people to study good citizenship by--

1. Observing the functions of local, county, State, national and world government through tours, trips, and discussions.
2. Learning how laws are made. Why are some hard to enforce?
3. Discussing the individual citizen's responsibilities.
4. Talking over national policies, problems of world peace, and our Nation's part in the United Nations.
5. Learning about the laws and customs concerning leases, wills, deeds, contracts, and taxes.
6. Knowing about all rural organizations, agencies, and programs that are active locally.
7. Practicing democracy with good meetings, active leadership, and effective programs.
8. Engaging in exchange visits on an inter-county, inter-state, and international scale.

### Recreational and Social Activities

You will find individuals with talents, hobbies, and skills in every older-youth group. Discover and develop these things. Inspire youth to acquire new skills. Help them to teach each other. Recreation is one way of doing this.

See that leadership is developed. Arrange a variety of recreational and social activities.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Develop music appreciation with choral and other group singing, instrumental-group playing.
2. Develop dramatics, plays and skits, role playing or socio-drama, charades and stunts, ceremonials, pageants, and festivals.
3. Encourage social activities--parties, "mixers," and carnivals, family fun, active and quiet games for meetings, folk games, and festivals.
4. Plan camping and picnics: Week-long training camps, overnight and 1-day outings, picnics and "cook outs."
5. Provide training in arts and crafts, arrange hobby shows, encourage craft work and personal collections.
6. Plan tours and trips to: farms and homes, industries and cooperatives, points of scenic or historic interest, parks and recreation areas.
7. Encourage sports: field days, tournaments, ball games and "pasture leagues," winter sports, water sports.

### Community-Service Programs

Give young people a chance to grow personally through community service projects that improve their home community and their personal talents at the same time. This is one of the best methods known to train and develop good citizens. Begin with familiar jobs close to home. You will give many youth inspiration toward high ideals and sound values if you encourage them to beautify the church grounds, improve the schoolyard, or erect a historic marker. Your community becomes a personal thing when you have a part in its development. Here are some projects that worked:

For more attractive community life--

1. "Brighten the corner where you are" by clean-up, paint-up, or plant-up campaigns.
  2. Eliminate fly or mosquito hazards with a spray campaign.
  3. Organize a rat- and rubbish-elimination project.
  4. Plant "a mile of green" for roadside beautification.
  5. Develop a recreation area or a "pasture league."
  6. Start a drama, music, art, or folk festival.
  7. Study community-health, accident-, and fire-control facilities.
- Take needed steps for improvement.

For good community organization--

1. Support churches, schools, libraries, and hospitals.
2. Encourage individuals to study and participate in adult community and farm organizations.
3. Organize and support 4-H Club Work.
4. Study and follow the principles of cooperation and democratic action.

For a more abundant economic life--

1. Conduct a farm-to-market survey or tour.
2. Organize grading and judging demonstrations and contests.
3. Study consumer habits, and organize discussion programs built on marketing problems.
4. Study cooperatives, and help in their operations or activities.
5. Survey the problems of soil, water, and wildlife conservation. Take the needed steps to solve these problems.
6. Plant variety trial test plots. Hold public demonstrations.
7. Stimulate better rural-urban relations.

#### Building the Program

The YMW program is an important part of the program of the cooperative Extension Service. By adapting it to your local conditions, you can help young men and women to be healthy, useful citizens and enjoy an abundant rural life.

#### The New Name

"Extension Work with Young Men and Women" is the term for this program. It was first established nationally at the Jackson's Mill Conference in February 1949.<sup>1</sup> It will be used in national literature and other informational mediums, in reports to Congress, and in other ways. For shor use, the term YMW is proposed. In some States, local groups may continue to use specially adapted local names.

The term applies primarily to work with people approximately 18 to 30 years of age.

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<sup>1</sup> See p.

## Status Within the Cooperative Extension Service

You are familiar with the three other major divisions of extension work-- the 4-H Club, home demonstration, and agricultural programs. The YMW program is not a "new organization" but should be a regular part of Extension work. In this respect, you will not consider it as a fourth branch of Extension. All extension specialists, supervisors, and administrators, as well as county agents, should work on it.

However, because of the distinctly different kind of program to be developed, you will need to use new and different methods, specialist help, and local leadership. A separate system for evaluating and reporting results is desirable.

Young people aspire to be accepted as adults. Yet you find them most comfortable with others their own age. Many of them dropped out of youth programs because these were not challenging or stimulating enough. Or someone has labeled them "kid stuff." Since young people have different problems, interests, goals, and reactions from those of either juveniles or older adults, a specialized educational program is needed to help them.

YMW program should be developed as a particular phase of extension work, to bring new opportunities to young men and women. Some specialized staff members are needed. Certain responsibilities for promoting, supervising, and servicing the program should be designated at county, State, and national levels. But the work of helping young men and women with their problems must be the concern of all.

All county, State, and national YMW programs should be planned as an integral part of the over-all cooperative Extension program.

## Methods

Here are seven different methods for program building:

1. Adjust 4-H, agricultural, and home demonstration programs to include appeals for the 18 to 30 age group.
2. Offer help to other agencies and farm organizations working with young people.
3. Organize extension YMW groups and activities when they are needed or requested.
4. Work with individuals in informal groups with common interests.
5. Give indirect help through press, radio, letters, publications, and other information means.
6. Help individuals through direct contacts.
7. Encourage adult organizations, cooperatives, and 4-H Club groups to include young people in both membership and leadership capacities.

### If Asked to Help Organize A Group

Your county staff should help a representative committee to canvass or survey the local problems and situations to see if there is need for new organizations.

A representative group of young people and adult leaders from the community should meet to study this survey and determine their interests, needs, and organization requirements. You will find many advantages in making this study by community areas rather than on a county-wide basis. Although county-wide groups are usually successful, it is difficult to arrange a more intensive coverage later for those who will not travel to county meetings.

If there is need for a group, encourage the representative committee to elect temporary presiding officers. They should then draw up a list of prospective members, including everyone from 18 to 30 years of age in a given area. This becomes their "contact" list.

Arrange a general meeting. Often, full discussion of purposes, opportunities, and responsibilities of the young people as well as of the agents may be in order. As an agent, you should give help and counsel.

Encourage and assist officers and members to take the major role in planning and conducting their own programs. Be certain that they provide for--

Special and continuous training of leaders and committee workers.

Effective operation of committees.

Good public relations.

Well-planned, interesting, and balanced programs.

Pleasing and acceptable recreation and other social activities.

#### Try to Meet the Special Needs of Young Married Couples

Within the age group of 18 to 30 years, you will observe important differences between married and unmarried young people. With marriage, young adults acquire new goals and interests. Usually, they drop out of their older-youth groups. As soon as possible, they should be absorbed in the regular home demonstration, agricultural, or farm-organization programs of their community.

In one county, a study<sup>2</sup> of participation in home demonstration group activities in 1948 showed that --

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2 New York Agricultural College Extension. Study of Home Bureau Membership: State Summary--November 1948. 6 pp. Agr. Col. (Cornell) Ext., Ithaca (Processed)

Only 15 percent of the participants were under 30 years of age.

About 42 percent were 30 to 44 years of age.

About 37 percent were 45 to 64 years of age.

And 6 percent were 65 years of age or older.

Try some of the following ideas, all of which are being used successfully by other agents.

First, find out who these young married couples are. How many are there? Where do they live? What is their family status? What are their needs and interests?

Then broaden and increase the participation of young married couples in present groups and programs by special invitation and attractions for them.

Establish new groups or study clubs for young mothers and young farmers. Be careful to select meeting times convenient for them. A nursery or little tots' day school may be an important part of the arrangements. Some meetings for young mothers could be held at night when the fathers can watch the children. And turn about is fair play.

Encourage established groups to elect young officers and leaders. Many Granges report that this helps to vitalize programs and attract younger couples to the meetings.

Include information on family life, child development, health and welfare, credit and finance, beginning to farm, and on other problems that are typically those of young adults.

Establish field trials and public demonstration practices with young men and women taking part. Young people usually have an open mind and do not resist new methods. They also have a longer life ahead in which to use the information. They may be your next community leaders.

Establish a desire for continuous enlightenment among rural people. Your 4-H Clubs strike the spark of inquiry and interest. A good YMW program adds substance of lasting value at a time when the individual needs it most. Education is a continuous journey, not a destination reached on graduation from a formal institution.

#### How to Work With Young Men and Women in Other Ways

Help other groups with programs in agriculture, home economics, and related fields.

Make up a county mailing list of young men and women.

Organize special subject-matter meetings and field-test demonstrations.

Arrange tours, camps, short courses.

Include young people in farm and home visits.

Hold open house to acquaint young people with the extension staff and its services. Encourage office visits.

Send young people news letters and other special literature.

Prepare special press, radio, television, and exhibition programs.

Include young adults on county extension planning committees, and in cooperative councils and adult meetings.

Recognize young men and women and feature their work whenever possible.

#### Parents Can Help to Promote the Program

The support that we receive from interested persons will decide the success of this program. Get in touch with parents. It may not be desirable

for them to attend YMW meetings, but they should know what the program is about. A word of encouragement from a parent often makes the difference between enthusiasm and indifference on the part of a young person.

Here are seven points that may be helpful when you write to or talk with parents about YMW work:

1. The boy or girl of 18 needs most to become socially acceptable and economically independent.
2. Young people should be encouraged to make new friendships of a wholesome nature.
3. They should be helped to get started toward their own life goals with a little business partnership.
4. The family that plays together stays together. Encourage parents to make their children's friends feel welcome in their home.
5. It is the responsibility of parents to see that their county extension committee is aware of the need for helping young people.
6. If young men and women feel that there are no worthy community activities that they like, their parents should help them to arrange such services but should not dominate the program.
7. Young people should be encouraged to have new and broadening experiences. Parents should help them to try new ideas. When young men and women get married, parents should encourage them to establish a home of their own.

#### The Cooperation of Clergymen Is Important

An early contact with the religious leaders of the young people you hope to work with is important. Churchmen have a great and deep influence

on the lives of rural people. We should not overlook the importance of keeping them informed about extension programs. This is especially true with new work such as YMW programs.

The spiritual leaders' hopes and ambitions for the welfare of their people are closely related to the purposes of YMW activities. Much educational work is needed in most rural areas. For this reason local clergymen may see in the program another opportunity to improve rural welfare and culture.

YMW work is not a competing program. If the church is fulfilling all the interests and needs of young adults in the area, this program has no place there. But if the clergyman approached should feel that his program meets part of the needs but not all of them, then, perhaps, the Extension Service can help. Ask for his support.

Church workers have helped young-adult groups in many ways, by --

Contributing the needed spiritual note to YMW meetings and programs.

Supplying leadership and counsel.

Making satisfactory meeting places available.

Encouraging a well-informed and favorable attitude among adult community leaders.

Assisting in the development of community planning and coordinating counsels.

#### Work Out a Cooperative Arrangement with School Officials

In many communities there is a persistent drive to make over "the little red schoolhouse" of yesterday. Not only is the physical building being improved, but its functions, too, are changing.

Formerly the school was open only for classroom teaching activities or schoolboard meetings. Now it is fast becoming the social center of the community. Seats are no longer fastened to the floor. There is growing recognition that the school was built by all the people of the community and should be available for their use after formal school hours.

This trend offers an opportunity for you to work out a cooperative arrangement with school officials. Effective programs for young men and women often need a "home base" or a permanent meeting place. Using school facilities frequently is a good solution. It helps your YMW program. The YMW program also helps the school system become the social as well as educational center of the community.

Here are some suggested ideas for you to use in talking with a schoolman about your joint opportunity for cooperation:

Providing meeting places for YMW activities.

Cooperation in joint community and county planning activities.

Providing trained instructors' help with specialized problems such  
those relating to vocational counsel, music and drama, and  
industrial and commercial subjects.

Making recreational facilities available.

Permitting use of library and reference materials.

#### Why Farm-Organization Leaders Should Be Interested

In order to have a prosperous and abundant life for rural people, continuing education is essential. Leaders are needed for all phases of community life.

In your approach to farm-organization leaders, explain that the Extension Service is in a strategic position to help farm organizations and others develop broad programs. The experiences that young people gain from these activities will be not only helpful to them, but of continuing benefit to the community. Leaders of tomorrow are forming their attitudes and developing their talents today. It is highly important that their experiences should fit them for effective service to all rural people.

Here are some ways in which farm leaders can help this program for young men and women:

Help young people to develop into balanced and broadly informed leaders, fitted for all types of leadership experiences in their communities.

Influence county extension planning committees to design special programs for young adults.

Make these young people feel welcome at farm-organization meetings.

Give them positions of leadership and responsibility if they deserve them.

Call on extension agents to help with educational phases of the farm organization older-youth program if there is such a program.

Be sure to point out to farm leaders that Extension is publicly supported and therefore extension agents must work with all rural organizations, rather than with but one or two.

### Why Civic and Commercial Groups Should Support YMW Programs

The prosperity and progress of a community depend to a large extent upon the efficiency of its individual citizens. If they are well informed and use the best possible methods, the entire trade area is more likely to prosper.

Most civic and commercial groups within a city or town recognize that the welfare of agriculture is no longer an individual concern. What happens to farm income is reflected soon afterwards in retail and wholesale business.

Because of this definite interdependence, urban groups recognize the need for county extension services. They welcome extension agents at their meetings. They are anxious to hear about programs that benefit farm people. Their interest in 4-H Club work has been of great importance in building up its public recognition and the prestige attached to it.

In the development of extension programs for young men and women, you have another opportunity to foster good rural-urban relationships. Point out to our urban friends that of all the boys and girls born on farms, half must leave for occupations elsewhere. This migration usually takes place soon after young people leave high school. A majority of the young men and women of 18 to 30 years of age who are now living in rural areas will remain there. It is doubly important that these young people be provided with effective educational programs.

When you are talking or planning with civic leaders about joint opportunities to be found in programs for young men and women, here are a few suggested ideas:

1. Exchange of a courtesy membership between civic or commercial groups and YMW groups.

2. Exchange of meeting programs and speakers. Each organization might put on one program a year for the other.
3. Joint development of community festivals or trade days.
4. Provision for a satisfactory YMW meeting place made by the urban group.
5. Financial sponsorship of YMW community-service projects by civic or commercial clubs.
6. Extending invitations, on behalf of YMW groups, to urban groups to attend field-demonstration trials or other method-and-result demonstrations.
7. Arranging for vocational tours for YMW groups to observe urban business, labor, and professional activities.

### How the YMW Plan Was Developed

A representative national committee of agricultural educators and experts has carefully reviewed the programs, policies, goals, and methods of the cooperative Extension Service. As part of its deliberation, it studied how Extension was meeting the needs of young men and women. The report that followed is now considered a fundamental policy document.<sup>3</sup> The following paragraphs, adapted from the report, show the high degree of importance the committee attached to this work:

A very significant development of recent years is the organized extension program for older youth or young adults. It is directed to young men and women whose interests and needs have matured beyond the types of programs usually associated with 4-H Club work, but who have not yet been effectively absorbed into adult extension work. This is a strategically important group in rural society deserving the same proportionate time and effort on the part of Extension as 4-H Club members and adults. The forward-looking programs for this age group now being conducted in a few States need to be developed further and similar programs organized in other States.

More intensive work needs to be done. Better ways of organizing the work need to be found. More attractive program activities are needed. This group needs more opportunity for self-expression of its energetic talents.

To further develop extension policies and programs for young men and women, a National Extension Young Adult Planning Conference was held at Jackson's Mill, W. Va., February 21 to 24, 1949. A second meeting, "National YMW In Service Training Conference for Extension Workers" was held at Robert Allerton Park, Monticello, Illinois, October 4 to 8, 1953.

The reports<sup>4</sup> and recommendations of these national conferences have since been received or approved by the Committee on Extension Organization and Policy of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. Most of the suggestions in this publication are based on recommendations from these two national conference reports.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture and Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies, and Goals. 72 pp. U.S. Dept. Agr., Washington, D. C. August 1948

<sup>4</sup> Report of National Extension Young Adult Planning Conference. 74 pp. Jackson's Mill, Weston, W. Va. (Processed)  
Report of National YMW In Service Training Conference for Extension Workers. 59 pp. Robert Allerton Park, Monticello, Illinois, October 4-8, 1953. (Processed)

## Seven Guiding Principles for Extension Workers

1. Aim the YMW program primarily toward rural young men and women from 18 to 30 years of age.
2. Build programs upon the needs and interests of the young people in your county. These vary greatly and change from time to time.
3. Assign definite responsibilities to each national, State, and county extension worker. All have important contributions for work with young men and women.
4. Include young people and representatives of interested agencies and organizations in both planning and action phases.
5. Develop several different approaches:

Adjust your 4-H, agricultural, and home demonstration programs to include appeals for this age group.

Offer help to other agencies and organizations working with young people.

Organize extension groups and activities for young men and women if necessary.

Work with young people in informal groups.

Give indirect help through press, radio, letters, publications, and other information means.

Help individuals through direct contacts.

6. Move into new and underdeveloped fields of education. Provide specialist help and give training to leaders in vocational guidance, counseling, social development, health, recreation, economic and social problems.
7. County programs of YMW work should be an integral part of the county extension program. The YMW planning committee should be a part of the over-all county extension planning committee.

## What the Program Aims To Do

Extension is trying to help young people to---

Acquire knowledge and skills in farming and homemaking.

Develop leadership and provide continuing opportunities for young people

to prepare themselves for full adult responsibilities.

Develop spiritually.

Understand our democracy and the responsibilities and privileges of

American citizenship.

Obtain vocational guidance.

Plan worth-while social and recreational programs.

Organize community-service programs.

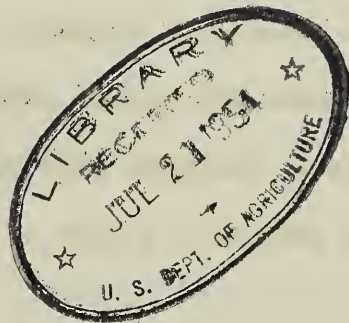
Study and discuss broad economic and social questions.

Make desirable social adjustments and prepare for wholesome family living.

Appreciate cultural values and the advantages of rural living.

Analyze community problems of conserving human and natural resources.

Understand the problems of both rural and urban people.





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